

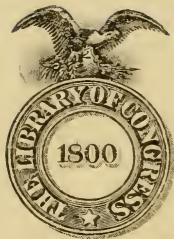
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THE  
OLD WISCONSE

By WILLIAM ELLIS

THE PHILOSOPHER PRESS, WAUSAU,  
WISCONSIN, JUNE, M D C C C X C I X



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# THE OLD WISCONSE

By WILLIAM ELLIS



THE PHILOSOPHER PRESS, WAUSAU,  
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THE OLD  
WISCONSE

## The Old Wisconse

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An' so ye think the Old Wisconse 's a mighty  
pretty stream?

A tumblin' 'round among the rocks, an'  
sparklin' with the gleam

Of sunshine fallin' through the spray, like  
di'monds in the hair

Of women who seem bent to see what gewgaws  
they kin wear?

Well, yes, she is a pretty stream. leastwise she  
is to me—

But laws—I've seen the days when 'deed she  
was a stream to see.

She aint no-ways the crick she was way back in  
early days,

With lots of camps an' loggers all along her  
windin' ways.

## The Old Wisconsin

---

---

The railroad seems to kind o' knock the beauty  
from the scene,

The birds don't seem to harmonize with  
sizz'lin screechin' steam;

There aint no livin' railroad that can run a piece  
o' wood,

An' do the sense of nature in a man a bit of  
good.

It kind o' takes the tuck clean out a quiet,  
peaceful stream,

To see the world go rushin' by behind the push  
of steam.

An' when it comes to foliage, bright with all its  
autumn shades,

You can't get that from wire-strung poles cut  
out from forest glades.

## The Old Wisconse

---

You folks don't know the Old Wisconse,  
a-ridin' by in cars;

A-leavin' Tomah when the sun's just kissin' out  
the stars,

An' gett'n' up to Tomahawk along at sun-high  
noon—

That's goin' up the Old Wisconse a heap o'  
sight too soon.

You can't see where she glides out from the  
overhangin' trees—

That smile upon her as they bow beneath the  
gentle breeze:

You can't see where the waters dash up into angry  
foam

Against the rocks that seem to try to stop them  
as they roam.

## The Old Wisconsin

---

I mind the time—it's years ago—I started from  
the P'int,

An' got along to Joe Dessert's to stay for over-  
night,

An' thanked my lucky stars an' all the gods I  
ever had,

That I had got a chance to sleep one more night  
in a bed;

'Cause I was on my way clear up to seven-thirty-  
three,

An' I knew that was nigh the last of livin' I  
should see,

Yes, bless your soul, I looked the land all over  
this here stream

Long 'fore they ever had a mill that used a pound  
of steam.

## The Old Wisconse

---

An' when a feiler's got his house all strapped  
across his back,

An' starts out in the woods to tramp without a  
sign of track,

With heaven's great, broad, blue, deep sky the  
only roof he's got,

An' sweetly smellin' boughs of pine to be his  
only cot,

He somehow gets a long ways nearer to what God  
had ought to be,

Than you can get in any church that I have ever  
see :

An' I don't b'lieve you ever heerd such songs  
of music sweet

As comes from God's bright songsters in the  
wildest wood's retreat.

## The Old Wisconsin

Somehow you get away from things that bother  
up the mind,

An' then you can't help thinkin' things a mighty  
different kind

Than when the rush of saw-mills an' the crash of  
railroad trains

Keep business deals and figgers hustlin', bustlin'  
through yer brains :

An, somehow when ye get alone, away out in the  
pines,

Ye think of things ye would n't think at any  
other times.

An' on such trips as these, alone, in days long  
years ago,

The Old Wisconsin an' me was friends, as on  
her way she flowed.

## The Old Wisconse

---

An' then she was a pretty stream—shy like a  
modest maid,

She'd peep out from a glassy pool beneath a  
forest glade,

Then coy she'd dance along awhile, as gay as  
any girl,

An' then she'd break out in the gayest, maddest,  
merriest swirl,

An' dash down over rocks an' stones, as mad as  
any shrew,

An', 'shamed-like, on she'd float away in quiet,  
placid blue.

Oh, she was like a woman in them good old by-  
gone days—

She had her failin's, true to tell, but she had  
her winnin' ways.



## The Old Wisconse

But now her beauty's most all gone; she's broken  
down by work,

For, what with all her loveliness, the Wisconse  
aint no shirk;

She's toted down the saw-logs that was once her  
life an' pride,

She's turned the wheels of saw-mills, that have  
sprung up by her side;

She's give her wealth of water to the clouds for  
gentle rain

That bathes the land in plenty so it brings forth  
fruit again;

She waits in prison-cage dams for the drive the  
saw-mills need,

While beauty fades and glory dies to satisfy  
man's greed.

## The Old Wisconse

---

But then, she's still the Old Wisconse, an'  
still she's dear to me ;

I love her for the long years past ; for what she  
used to be ;

An' now I s'pose she's worth the more, with  
all her towns an' mills ;

The whistles mean more business than the wild  
birds' sweetest trills.

But I can't help rememb'rin' how she looked  
long years ago ,

When through the untouched timber was the path  
she used to flow ,

An' 't aint no use a talkin' , them there was the  
days for me—

The Old Wisconse wont never seem the crick  
she used to be.











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